

RESIDENTS FINDING PEACE AND COMFORT AT SPRINGFIELD VILLAGE



The Senior Residences at Springfield Village
Photo by Andy Foster for RPM



Springfield Village resident Laverne Simmons says she really appreciates the workmanship that went into the building.

Laverne Simmons likes to describe her new surroundings as a “little bit of heaven on earth.” As she walks around her new one-bedroom apartment at Springfield Village in Newark, a joint venture between New Community Corp. and RPM Development Group, Simmons couldn’t be more grateful.

“Everything is so nice and the quality of the work is excellent. This is so much better than where I was living in Jersey City and struggling to pay the rent,” said Simmons, 58, a security officer at a Jersey City condominium complex who moved in late last year.

The 120-unit, \$27.4 million Springfield Village development, which began accepting its first residents last fall and is now fully occupied, includes apartments located in The Plaza at Springfield Village for families. Individuals 55 and up like Simmons are housed in a separate building which fronts on 15th Avenue, the Senior Residences. The development includes units set-aside for special populations like homeless veterans.

Prices for apartments range from \$659-\$791 for a one bedroom; \$790-\$946 for a two bedroom to \$927-\$1,065 for a three bedroom, with rents based

on income. The buildings feature laundry facilities on every floor, on-site underground parking, rooftop terraces and energy efficient design technology.

“My son first came past this building last October and told me about it,” explained Simmons, who was living with a niece after moving out of the Jersey City apartment where she struggled to keep up with her \$900 rental payments. “Everything they told me I needed I brought to them right away. It only took about a month and I had my own place.”

Springfield Village has managed to transform a vacant parcel of land on one of Newark’s busiest corridors into a community asset, making it a catalyst for economic revitalization in this former riot-torn area of the city’s Central Ward.

This marks the second project in which New Community has teamed up with RPM to create affordable housing. In 2010, the duo opened a 50-unit mid rise building in Newark’s West Ward known as Roseville Commons a year after breaking ground. Both Springfield Village and Roseville Commons are being managed by RPM, which is headquartered in Montclair.

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FORTITUDE

“Disappointments were not meant to destroy you. They were meant to strengthen you and give you fortitude to accomplish your God-given destiny.”

Kemmy Nola

“Gird your hearts with silent fortitude, suffering yet hoping all things.”

Felicia Hemans

“Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”

Maya Angelou

“Fix in your mind to overcome all obstacles. When you truly determine this, the dawn will start to appear.”

Lincoln Patz

“Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him.”

Bible-James 1:12, The New American Bible, Revised Ed

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YOUTH ORCHESTRA AT NURSING HOME



Members of the New Jersey Symphony's Greater Newark Youth Orchestra performed for residents of New Community's Extended Care Center as part of an annual community outreach event.

The students, dressed crisply in black and white attire, hailed from high schools throughout Northern New Jersey.

"I think playing the violin is a community experience and not just for myself. It makes other people happy," said Alex Ren, a sophomore at Millburn High School.

The nursing home residents listened intently as the students played

pieces from composers including Mozart, Taffanel and Dvorak.

At the conclusion of each, they applauded. By the end of the concert, many verbally voiced their appreciation to the students.

"Thank you. Thank you. That was good. I enjoyed that. It really lifted me," said nursing home resident Otis Williams, who described the music as simply "beautiful."

Agnes Morton, another resident, said the concert reminded her of an orchestra she used to belong to as a young person.

"We were called the Musical Associates. I was the conductor," she said. "Memories, memories."



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"NCC has a long track record of bringing a full range of quality services to the Newark community," commented RPM President Ed Martoglio. "RPM is proud to have collaborated with NCC to turn this long vacant site into a new community providing housing options for seniors, families and formerly homeless individuals."

Richard Rohrman, CEO of New Community, said the peace and comfort residents like Simmons are experiencing goes hand in hand with NCC's mission of improving quality of life to reflect individual God-given dignity and personal achievement.

"What better way to improve someone's quality of life than to provide them with a beautiful place to live at a price they can afford," he said. "Springfield Village manages to accomplish both."

According to Martoglio, Springfield Village is a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified project, meaning "residents pay less in utility bills and have a healthier place to live compared to typical multifamily buildings."

EXTENDED CARE CENTER UNDERGOING MAJOR RENOVATION



New Community's 180-bed Extended Care Center is undergoing a complete renovation. The lobby is being redesigned and upgraded and patient rooms are also being enhanced. Other areas to be included are the rehabilitation department, Adult Medical Day Care and the cafeteria. New Community's Environmental Services Department is performing the work.

WORKFORCE EXPANSION



In this photo, student Carla Bonheur, who is enrolled in the Older Youth Program, is being assisted by academic instructor Sadrud-Din Shah. A \$75,000 contract from the city of Newark was awarded to NCC's Workforce Development Center to serve 25 Out-Of-School youth between the ages of 16-21, offering a combination of academic enrichment and vocational training. The program started March 10th.

CREDIT UNION OFFERS FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING



Freda Johnson, standing with New Community Federal Credit Union accountant, Atul Shah, displays her first-time homebuyer course completion certificate. The course is offered at no cost.

So you think you've found a home you'd like to buy, but have become so focused on your "wish list," you've lost sight of how much house you can actually afford.

A course offered by the New

Community Federal Credit Union can help you avoid many of the pitfalls of first-time home buying. A local realtor, Freda Johnson of Newark, recently found this out when she took the course with Atul Shah, the credit union accountant.

"It was a one-on-one-session that covered everything from personal spending habits to credit reports and budgeting," said Johnson, who is employed by Weichert Realtors in West Orange and is looking to buy a house herself.

Johnson and a friend were asked to bring documentation covering their income, the property they wanted to purchase, along with records like their credit reports and recent credit card statements.

"He really sits you down and asks some really thought-provoking questions," she said of Shah. "He not only wants you to be able to purchase a house, but his goal is to help you keep the house and eventually pay it off."

If your mortgage is \$2,372 per month, for instance, paying \$2,572--or \$200 more every month instead-- rather than the minimum payment, you cut down the number of required payments, thus reducing the term of your mortgage loan and interest payment.

"I think this was a very eye-opening experience for them," said Shah. "They really got the point."

Johnson is currently studying for a doctorate degree in business and was pleased to also gain some information on how to better handle her student loans so they are not an impediment to her getting pre-qualified for a home loan.

THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE



SAIF associate Jovonna Hinnant, right, meets often with Zuirrae Mitchell, her intensive case manager, which helps keep her encouraged.

Jovonna Hinnant enrolled in New Community's SAIF program more than a year ago. Back then, the single mother with a now 8-year-old son admits she lacked the motivation to help better herself so she could get off public assistance.

"When I first started coming here, I thought it was over for me," she said. "But I realized I had to push harder because I have a son who is counting

on me."

The Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families program, or SAIF, is for individuals and families who have exhausted their maximum 60 months on public assistance. Under the SAIF program, individuals and families who adhere to program rules can still receive cash benefits, plus support services such as child care and transportation for up to 24 months.

"Coming here has helped me a whole lot," said Hinnant. "It's a struggle being a single parent who's raising a child that's growing so fast. But here, they made me realize I have to push harder."

While at SAIF, Hinnant is able to conduct job searches using its computers and she is also taking GED classes to obtain her high school equivalency diploma. A new boutique also has clothing available if she needs it to go out on interviews.

"She really has come a long way.

It feels good to see that growth in her," said Zuirrae Mitchell, the SAIF intensive case manager who is working with Hinnant.

Dr. Seuss Celebration



Classroom 7 at Community Hills Early Learning Center in Newark celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss with a breakfast that also involved parent volunteers. Here the children are being instructed in how to make eggs. Throughout the day, many Dr. Seuss children's books were also read aloud, including the classic *Green Eggs and Ham*.

SAMMY GEBREYESUS



In every organization, there are people who go about their duties quietly and unassumingly, but their dedication and contributions speak volumes. Sammy Gebreyesus is one of them. He started working at the NCC Priory restaurant back in the early 1990s as a waiter, eventually advancing to maitre d' and then manager. He would end up years later in NCC management, where he is now an Asset Manager. In this role, he oversees the physical upkeep of NCC's properties, the preparation of the housing budgets, billing, compliance issues, front-line staff training and making sure vendors meet all regulatory requirements.

But one thing about Gebreyesus has never changed. He continues to go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the mission of

NCC is carried out. Not with any fanfare, but with the utmost degree of professionalism, dedication and attention to detail.

"I love working at New Community because I enjoy helping people and making sure people get what they need," he said. "I know how important 'home' is for our residents and how it helps to stabilize their families and their lives. At the end of the day, that gives me satisfaction."

Gebreyesus was chosen as the recipient of this year's Monsignor William J. Linder Award, NCC's highest honor, during the Employee Recognition Ceremony back in January. He has great admiration for Monsignor and has witnessed how hard he has worked over the years to make NCC what it is today.

"He knows the place from the top

to the bottom and I have watched him work day and night. I am just the benefactor of all he has done," Gebreyesus said.

Born in Ethiopia, Gebreyesus grew up in a family of 10 children, where he was the third youngest. He followed his sister to the United States and studied engineering at Newark's Essex County College. New Community was his first job and he never left.

"A guy from my country was working here and told me about the job at the Priory," he said.

Outside of NCC, Gebreyesus has a reputation as a caring, compassionate individual who is always reaching out to those in need. Whether it's a distressed widow who needs assistance or someone sick in the hospital, you can count on Gebreyesus to be there.

"Sammy is just an all-around good person who can be counted on to be there when you need him," said Kathy Spivey, NCC Chief of Staff.

Next to helping carry out the NCC mission of improving quality of life for inner city residents to reflect individual God-given dignity and personal achievement, Gebreyesus makes it clear that his family is the greatest treasure of his life. They include his wife, Helen Abraha, who works as receptionist/secretary at NCC and daughters, Ruthie, 14, and Mesgana, 8.

The couple, who have been married for almost 18 years, were even married at NCC's Priory.

"I am blessed. I have everything I have ever wanted in life," he said.

OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.